

IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (Currently Amended) A device for storing plate-shaped substrates, ~~particularly wafers or test wafers, as they occur, above all, in the manufacture of electronic components,~~ whereby the device comprising:

5        ~~has~~ a plurality of consecutive storage elements in a stacked direction, each of which is provided for accommodating at least one substrate[[,]];

a means for depositing a substrate provided for each of the storage elements is  
~~provided with means for depositing the substrate;~~ and

~~the storage elements have~~ a stacking area associated with each of the storage  
10    elements, which is each stacking area being provided for arranging the respective storage  
      element within a stack of storage elements.

2. (Currently Amended) A device in accordance with claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~  
wherein the storage elements can be stacked directly on one another.

3. (Currently Amended) A device in accordance with claim 1 [[or 2]], ~~characterized~~  
~~in that~~ wherein the storage elements can be handled at their stacking area for producing an  
increased distance between two consecutive storage elements, as a result of which one of  
the storage elements is accessible for a deposit or a removal of a substrate.

4. (Currently Amended) A device in accordance with ~~at least one of the above~~

claims claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein a relative motion can be carried out between the two storage elements for producing an increased distance.

5. (Currently Amended) A device in accordance with ~~at least one of the above~~ claims claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the storage elements are embodied as at least approximately self-contained storage rings.

6. (Currently Amended) A device in accordance with ~~at least one of the above~~ claims claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the means for depositing ~~are embodied as~~ comprises inwardly and upwardly directed projections, by means of which a substrate can be deposited above a ring section of the storage element.

7. (Currently Amended) A device in accordance with claim 6, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the projections have a horizontally directed contact surface.

8. (Currently Amended) A device in accordance with ~~at least one of the above~~ claims claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein storage elements arranged on top of one another form an at least laterally, ~~preferably completely~~, enclosed space.

9. (Currently Amended) A device in accordance with claim 8, ~~characterized by~~ further comprising means for producing clean air, with which a clean room atmosphere can

be produced in the enclosed space.

10. (Currently Amended) A device in accordance with claim 9, ~~characterized in that~~  
wherein an overpressure can be produced in the interior of the device with the clean room  
means.

11. (Currently Amended) A device in accordance with claim 8 [[or 9]],  
~~characterized by~~ further comprising means for a predetermined discharge of a gas from  
within the device outwards.

12. (Currently Amended) A device in accordance with ~~at least one of the above~~  
~~claims~~ claim 1, ~~characterized by~~ further comprising means for increasing stability and/or  
positioning accuracy of superimposed storage elements.

13. (Currently Amended) A device in accordance with claim 12, ~~characterized by~~  
further comprising a ~~at least one~~ centering means formed on one of the storage elements,  
which centering means cooperates with a centering means of a consecutive storage element  
in the stacked direction for increasing the stability.

14. (Currently Amended) A device in accordance with ~~at least one of the above~~  
~~claims~~ claim 1, ~~characterized by~~ further comprising a tool for producing a relative motion

between storage elements, which tool is provided with a first contact surface for contacting an upper storage element and a second contact surface for contacting a lower storage element, whereby motion means are provided, with which a relative motion can be carried out between at least one of the storage elements and at least one of the contact surfaces, in order to increase the distance between the storage elements.

15. (Currently Amended) A device in accordance with claim 14, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the two contact surfaces of the tool are offset against one another in the stacked direction of the storage elements.

16. (Currently Amended) A device in accordance with ~~one or both of the above claims 14 and 15~~ claim 14, ~~characterized by~~ wherein a relative mobility of the two contact surfaces is provided.

17. (Currently Amended) A device in accordance with ~~at least one of the above claims~~ claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the tool is movable in a plane parallel to surfaces of the disk-shaped substrates.

18. (Currently Amended) A transport container for transporting substrates in a lockable space, ~~whereby~~ the transport container ~~has~~ comprising: storage elements, on each of which a substrate can be arranged, ~~characterized by a device in accordance with at least~~

~~one of the above claims 1 through 13~~ the storage elements provide a device each with a  
5 plurality of consecutive storage elements in a stacked direction, each of which is provided  
for accommodating at least one substrate, a means for depositing a substrate provided for  
each of the storage elements and a stacking area associated with each of the storage  
elements, with each stacking area being provided for arranging the respective storage  
element within a stack of storage elements.

19. (Currently Amended) A method for handling a disk-shaped substrate;  
particularly a wafer, as it is provided for the manufacture of semiconductor components,  
whereby, for approaching a tool, which has two contact surfaces, to a specific storage  
element within a stack of separatable storage elements, a first relative motion is carried out,  
5 the specific storage element is contacted with the first contact surface and an adjacent  
storage element is contacted with the second contact surface, then a second relative motion  
is carried out, by means of which the distance between the two storage elements in the  
stacked direction is increased by means of the tool.